

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A mower head comprising:  
a deck having at least three sides and at least one  
side wall depending from said deck;  
at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to  
5 said deck on an axis extending through said deck, said deck  
being disposed above and generally parallel to said blade;  
and  
a guard assembly comprising:  
an actuating member mounted on said deck,  
10 a guard attached to said actuating member and  
pivotally attached to said deck via a hinge which is mounted  
to two of said at least three sides and extends at an obtuse  
angle in relation to two of said at least three sides of said  
deck, and  
15 a flap depending from said guard and movable  
in relation to said guard, said flap being oriented in a  
plane spaced from a plane of said guard, wherein said plane  
of said guard, in its entirety, is coplanar with a plane of  
said deck, in one orientation of said guard.

2. (Original) The mower head of claim 1 wherein  
said actuating member comprises a hydraulic cylinder and a  
piston assembly.

3. (Original) The mower head of claim 1 wherein  
said deck further comprises a flap depending from one of said  
at least three sides of said deck.

4. (Original) The mower head of claim 3 wherein  
said guard includes a first wall which comprises an  
approximately straight edge and a second wall which comprises  
a plurality of angled sections.

5. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 4 wherein two of said deck at least three sides are normal to each other and a third of said at least three sides is positioned at an obtuse angle in relation to said two of said 5 deck at least three sides.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 1 wherein said actuating member is mounted on said deck at a location spaced from said hinge.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A mower head comprising:  
a deck having at least three sides;  
at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to said deck on an axis extending through said deck, said deck 5 being disposed above and generally parallel to said blade; and

a guard assembly comprising:  
an actuating member mounted on said deck,  
a hinge extending between and mounted to two 10 of said at least three sides of said deck at an angle with respect to said two of said at least three sides,

a guard attached to said actuating member and pivotally attached to said deck via said hinge, wherein a plane of said guard is parallel to, and spaced from, a plane of said deck 15 in one orientation of said guard, and

~~a flap which depends from said guard and is movable in relation to said guard, said flap being oriented in a plane spaced from a plane of said guard.~~

10. (Original) The mower head of claim 9 wherein said actuating member comprises a hydraulic cylinder and a

~~piston, said cylinder including a chamber surrounding said piston.~~

11. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 9 wherein one of said at least three sides comprises a plurality of angled sections.

12. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 11 wherein said guard includes a first wall which comprises a plurality of angled sections which matingly interconnect with said angled sections of said one of at least three sides and a second wall which comprises a plurality of angled sections.

13. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 9 wherein said deck further comprises a fourth side and at least three side walls, one depending from at least three of said four sides, wherein two of said at least three side walls are rigid.

14. (Original) The mower head of claim 13 wherein one of said three side walls of said deck comprises a flap depending from one of said four sides of said deck.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The mower head of claim ~~16~~ 9 wherein one of said at least three sides further comprises an extension which protrudes under said guard.

18. (Currently Amended) A mower head comprising:  
a deck comprising:  
at least four sides, and

~~three side walls, one depending from each of~~  
5 three of said at least four sides, wherein two of said three  
side walls are rigid;

at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to  
said deck on an axis extending through said deck, said deck  
being disposed above and generally parallel to said blade;  
10 and

a guard assembly comprising:

an actuating member mounted on said deck,  
a hinge mounted to and extending at an angle  
in relation to two adjacent ones of said at least four  
15 sides of said deck,

a guard attached to said actuating member and  
pivotally attached to said deck via said hinge, and

a flap which depends from said guard and is  
movable in relation to said guard, said flap being oriented  
20 in a plane spaced apart from a plane of said guard and  
including a plurality of discretely angled sections.

19. (Original) The mower head of claim 18 wherein  
said actuating member comprises a hydraulic cylinder and a  
piston assembly.

20. (Original) The mower head of claim 18 wherein  
one of said three side walls comprises a flap depending from  
one of said four sides of said deck.

21. (Original) The mower head of claim 18 wherein  
one of said deck at least four sides comprises a plurality of  
angled sections.

22. (Previously Amended) The mower head of claim 21  
wherein said guard includes a first wall which comprises a  
plurality of angled sections which matingly interconnect with  
said angled sections of one of said at least four sides and

~~5 a second wall which comprises a plurality of angled sections.~~

23. (Original) The mower head of claim 18 wherein a top surface of said guard and a top surface of said deck are located in the same plane.

24. (Original) The mower head of claim 18 wherein a top surface of said guard and a top surface of said deck are located in different planes.

25. (Original) The mower head of claim 24 wherein one of said at least four sides further comprises an extension which protrudes under said guard.

26-37. (Canceled)

38. (Previously Added) The mower head of claim 1, wherein said flap is a resilient, one-piece flap.

39. (Previously Added) The mower head of claim 9, wherein said flap is a resilient, one-piece flap.

40. (Previously Added) The mower head of claim 18, wherein said flap is a resilient, one-piece flap.

41-47. (Canceled)

48. (Currently Amended) A mower head comprising:

a deck having a longitudinal axis, at least three sides including a single forward side and at least one side wall depending from said deck;

5 at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to said deck on a rotational axis extending through said deck, said deck being disposed above and generally parallel to said blade; and

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a guard assembly comprising:

10 an actuating member mounted on said deck,  
a guard attached to said actuating member and  
pivotally attached to said deck via a hinge which extends at  
an obtuse angle in relation to two adjacent ones of said at  
least three sides of said deck, including said forward side,  
15 wherein said guard is located on said forward side and an  
adjacent side such that said longitudinal axis extends near  
a side edge of said guard,

said actuating member including a linkage assembly  
comprising a first rigid link element mounted to said guard  
20 and a second rigid link element mounted to said deck; and  
a flap depending from said guard.

49. (Currently Amended) A mower head comprising:

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a box shaped deck having five sides, four two opposed  
sides of which are perpendicular in relation to another two  
opposed sides ~~each other~~ and a fifth side of which is  
5 oriented at an obtuse angle in relation to its adjacent  
sides;

at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to said  
deck on a rotational axis extending through said deck, said  
deck being disposed above and generally parallel to said  
10 blade; and

a guard ~~movably~~ pivotally attached to said deck fifth  
side via a hinge which extends parallel to the deck fifth  
side, such that said guard selectively pivots out of a plane  
of said deck.

50. (New) The mower head of claim 49, further  
comprising a flap extending from said guard, said flap being  
oriented in a plane spaced apart from a plane of said guard.

51. (New) The mower head of claim 50, wherein said  
flap ~~is movable in relation to said guard.~~

52. (New) The mower head of claim 49, further comprising a holding member for holding said guard in one rotational position in relation to said deck.

53. (New) The mower head of claim 52, wherein said holding member comprises a hydraulic cylinder and a piston, said cylinder including a chamber surrounding said piston.

54. (New) The mower head of claim 53, wherein said guard is attached to one of said hydraulic cylinder and piston and another of said hydraulic cylinder and piston is attached to said deck.

55. (New) The mower head of claim 53, wherein said guard includes a first wall comprising an approximately straight edge along which said guard is mounted to said hinge.

56. (New) The mower head of claim 49, further comprising a boom arm to which said deck is mounted.

57. (New) A mower head comprising:  
a deck having at least four sides including a front side;  
at least one cutting blade rotatably mounted to said deck on an axis extending through said deck, said deck being disposed above and generally parallel to said blade;  
a guard assembly comprising:  
a hinge extending at an angle between said front side and an adjacent one of said sides of said deck,  
a guard pivotally attached to said deck via said hinge, said guard including a portion protruding forwardly of a front edge of said front side of said deck.

58. (New) The mower head of claim 57, further

comprising a holding member for holding said guard in one rotational position in relation to said deck.

59. (New) The mower guard of claim 57, wherein said angle of said hinge is an obtuse angle.

60. (New) The mower guard of claim 56, further comprising a flap extending from said guard and movable in relation to said guard, said flap being oriented in a plane spaced apart from a plane of said guard.

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